

PEOPLE & THINGS

WHEN Princess Margaret, on her visit to Jamaica, goes rafting down the Rio Grande, it will not be a case of Minnehaha, hair flying in the breeze, shooting thunderous rapids between portages through swamp and jungle. First she will stay the night at the Tichfield Hotel, until recently the property of Mr. Errol Flynn, at Port Antonio, one of the five banana ports of Jamaica and once described by Miss Ella Wheeler Wilcox as the most beautiful harbour in the world.

The next morning, after breakfast, she and her party will drive, about an hour up into the foothills of the Blue Mountains and come to the low banks of a wide, graceful, shallow river which flows about five miles, dropping less than 500 feet in the process, to the sea. There the party will embark in couples on rafts of lashed bamboo, perhaps ten feet long by four feet broad, settle fairly comfortably down on wooden benches aft, and raise their parasols against the sun and the quick showers.

Raftsmen Royal

THE raftsmen, standing right forward, manoeuvre the raft with a long bamboo pole out into the slow current, and there follows an enchantingly languid voyage down between the great hills befeathered with bamboo and bright with the flowers of the giant Immortel. Lunch is taken on some sandspit or pebbled beach under the peeping eyes of the naked piccaninnies who come down from the wattle-and-daub huts on the hillsides whenever a raft is sighted.

The trip can take anything from an hour to the rest of the day. I hope Princess Margaret will be piloted by Red Grant, a cheerful, voluble giant of villainous aspect, and allow him to make for her his Strong Bak Soup—a ridiculous cauldron-brew of langoustines and exotic roots which tastes of absolutely nothing at all, but which somehow belongs to this elegant and delicately romantic adventure.

Nelson's Bookplate?

THE bookplate which I reproduce here is an heraldic curiosity which is puzzling the experts. It was given to me at Christmas-time by the proprietor of a renowned antique jeweller's just off Charing Cross Road when I was searching for a Nelson relic for a collector friend. I had just missed, it seemed, a Nelson fob seal which he had given to Sir John Gleigud, but, as consolation, the jeweller rummaged in a dusty parcel and generously presented me with what he understood to be a copy of Nelson's bookplate. The original copper-plate had been bought some twenty-five years ago by his

By ATTICUS

father, but was stolen when his premises were burgled during the war.

Mr. J. Munday, Librarian of the National Maritime Museum, was as intrigued as I was by this unrecorded relic, which, on his suggestion, I then turned over to Sir John Heston-Armstrong, Chester Herald, who, despite the holiday season, devoted himself enthusiastically to research.

Conflicting Clues

THE first problem is raised by the "labels"—or marks of cadency—on the shield and on

The Iron Vacuum

ALTHOUGH it has recently been easier to send correspondents behind the Iron Curtain, notably to Moscow, where Reuters's now have two staff representatives, and to Hungary, which is being more accommodating to foreign journalists, one still reads very little Iron Curtain news in the daily Press.

Perhaps this is because nothing happens behind the Iron Curtain except politics and economics. Even Eastern sport seems to occur only in Western stadiums and there is absolutely no crime or romance. "RUSS SLAYS FOUR: KILLS SELF" or "POLE AXES GRAMPA IN LODZ BAGNIO" never comes to oust Western "news" from our headlines.

So while I sincerely congratulate Reuters's on having at last secured accreditation for a staff man in Prague, I feel nothing but sympathy for the young Glasgow Scot, Ronnie Farquhar, whose task it will now be to get us all to read about the output of the national glass-works at Pilsen and the steady forward march of the Czech agrarian programme.

By Private Wire

THIS is the sort of story that Reuters's will not be reporting from Prague.

A big shot in the Communist Government had to have an operation. He sent his secretary to the leading hospital to make the final arrangements.

On his return the secretary reported that all was in order. His Excellency had only one decision to make.

"What is it?"
"Well, Comrade Excellency, you have to decide whether you wish to be operated on by the present surgeon-in-chief who used to be the hall-porter at the hospital, or by the present hall-porter who used to be the surgeon-in-chief."

Rear-Guard

ONE of the last revellers to leave the Chelsea Arts Ball found his way somehow to Waterloo and to a train which would take him home to Sunningdale.

As a precaution, he sought out the guard, pressed half-a-crown into his hand, pointed out his carriage and asked to be awakened at Sunningdale.

After a period of deep sleep he was in due course awakened. "Sunningdale," said a voice. "And here's your half-crown." Startled, the reveller carefully focused his eyes on the speaker.

He was a Rear-Admiral in uniform.



NELSON'S BOOKPLATE?

each supporter, indicating that the holder was an eldest son, which Nelson was not; secondly, Nelson had no right to quarter the Suckling arms (his mother's family) as is done here in the third quarter; thirdly, why, seeing that he was a Knight of the Bath, are the arms encircled by the ribbon of the Order of St. Joachim?

They cannot be the arms of a subsequent holder of the titles, for the premier honour was raised to an earldom, whereas these show the coronet of a viscount. Nor was any subsequent earl a Knight of St. Joachim.

Mr. Munday's guess—"but for the presence of St. Joachim"—is that the arms are those of the short-lived Viscount Merton, 1788-1808, heir to that Earl Nelson who was the Admiral's brother and successor. To that theory Chester Herald gives support, for he has discovered in the College of Arms records a royal licence permitting "Horatio Nelson, Esquire, commonly called Viscount Merton," to accept the Order of St. Joachim, his father, to whom the Order would otherwise have been given, being a clergyman. This theory would also account for the viscount's coronet instead of an earl's.

There are other details which indicate that the coat is the work of one not versed in heraldry, but the arms remain a mystery which, the experts agree, should now be placed in the public domain.